



Ability Tools

Assistive Technology Network

2014 Ability Tools Annual Report
Oct. 1, 2013 - Sept. 30, 2014



Ability Tools

Assistive Technology Network

OUR MISSION

“Ability Tools connects Californians with disabilities to assistive technology devices, tools and services to make life easier.”

ABOUT ABILITY TOOLS

Ability Tools, formerly the AT Network, is California's Assistive Technology Act Program. The AT Network was rebranded Ability Tools in July 2014.



...is now...



Ability Tools is one of 56 Assistive Technology Act funded programs that exist in each state and U.S. territory. We work with multiple partners, including device lending libraries, reuse centers, AT centers, Independent Living Centers and our membership to advance the use of AT in California.

We provide a variety of services for Californians with disabilities of all ages. Our services include:

- Device Loans
- Reuse program in affiliation with organizational partners
- Information & Referral
- AT Training (in-person and online)
- AT Exchange marketplace
- Technical assistance to organizations on AT issues
- Community presentations & outreach to increase AT awareness
- Up-to-date information on AT through social media and listservs

ABOUT ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY (AT)

Assistive Technology (AT) makes life easier. Specifically, assistive technology is any device, gadget, hardware or software used by a person with a disability to do things for themselves that might otherwise be difficult or impossible to do because of their disability.

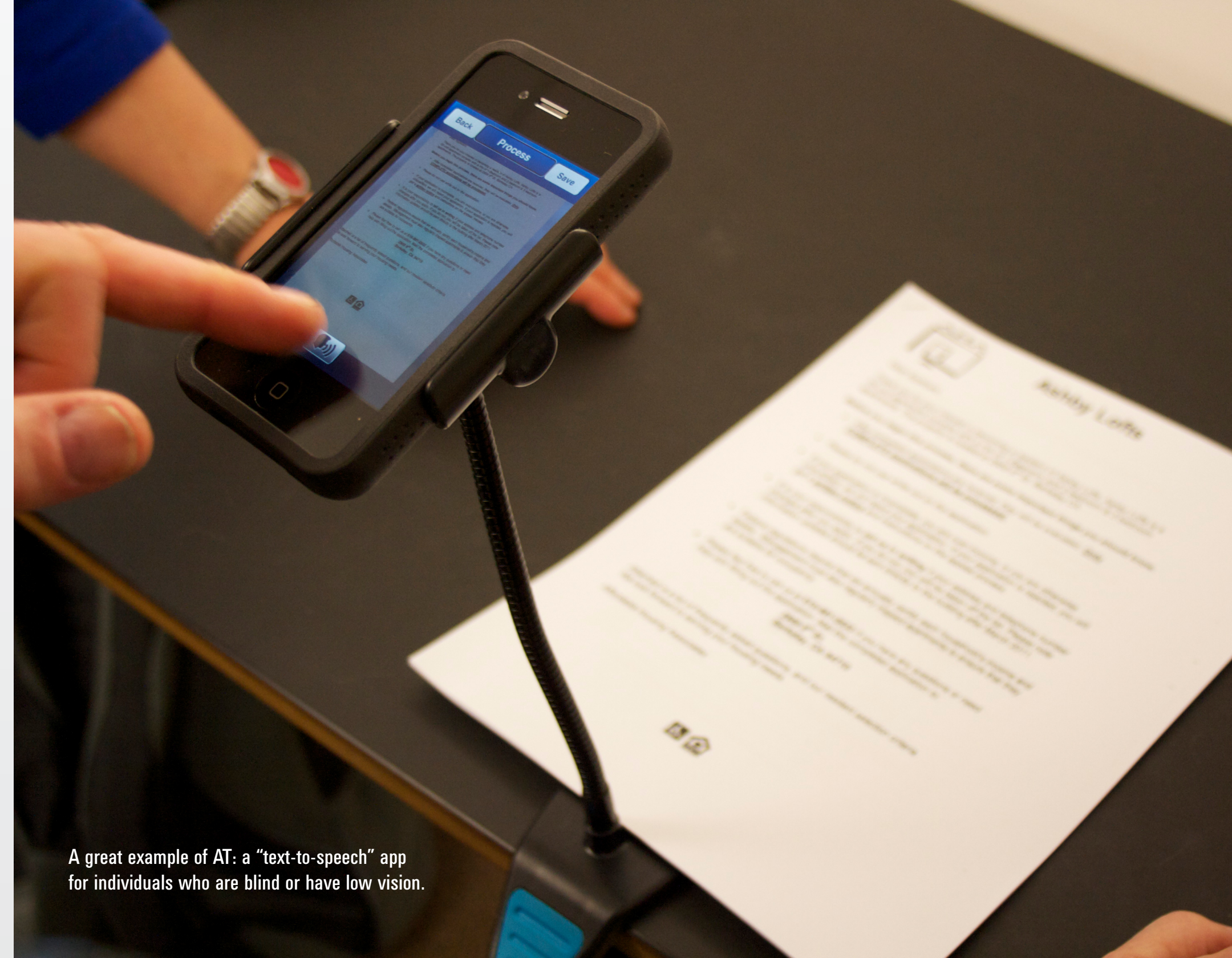
Assistive technology helps people with disabilities live, work, learn and play as independently as possible. AT includes low-tech items like a shower chair or a magnifier and high-tech equipment like tablet apps and environmental controls.

FUNDERS

Ability Tools is made possible through funding from the **Department of Rehabilitation**, financed by the **U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration** with funds allocated by the **Assistive Technology Act of 2004**.

In 2014 Ability Tools also received support from **Molina Healthcare**, the **Dana & Christopher Reeve Foundation**, and **Anthem Blue Cross**.





A great example of AT: a “text-to-speech” app for individuals who are blind or have low vision.

DEVICE LENDING LIBRARIES

Ability Tools funds Device Lending Libraries (DLLs) throughout the state and operates one DLL at CFILC's office in Sacramento. All DLLs loan out equipment free for 30 days, allowing individuals to try out different AT solutions before they make a purchase or when they have a temporary need for AT. Our AT Exchange website makes it easy to search through hundreds of items available for loan. Some examples of devices Californians can borrow include portable ramps, communication devices, magnifiers, tablets and computer software.



19-year-old Kyland with a communication device.

Total Items Loaned

1,462

Top Devices Loaned:

Speech
Communication
Devices

377

Assistive
Technology
for Vision

242

Assistive
Mobility
Equipment

233

Kyland's Story

Kyland is a 19-year-old young man who is nonverbal; however, he comprehends spoken language well and is able to follow a complex conversation. He relies on the use of communication devices to be able to interact on a daily basis. With a communication device, he types messages, uses predictive features and accesses core vocabulary.

Unfortunately, when Kyland graduated from high school, he lost his communication device. ATEC, a DLL funded by Ability Tools, evaluated Kyland and is assisting him and his family in acquiring a new device through California Children's Services. While waiting for funding, Kyland borrowed an MT4 communication device from Ability Tools so he can communicate and participate in social conversations. Kyland is extremely thankful for the loan and is also very excited to receive his new communication device in the very near future.

Eric's Story

Eric suffered a stroke that affected his peripheral vision. He was undergoing an initial evaluation at the Department of Rehabilitation and had yet to try out AT that could assist him. Eric's eye doctor recommended that he borrow some vision aids available at CRIL, a Device Lending Library funded by Ability Tools.

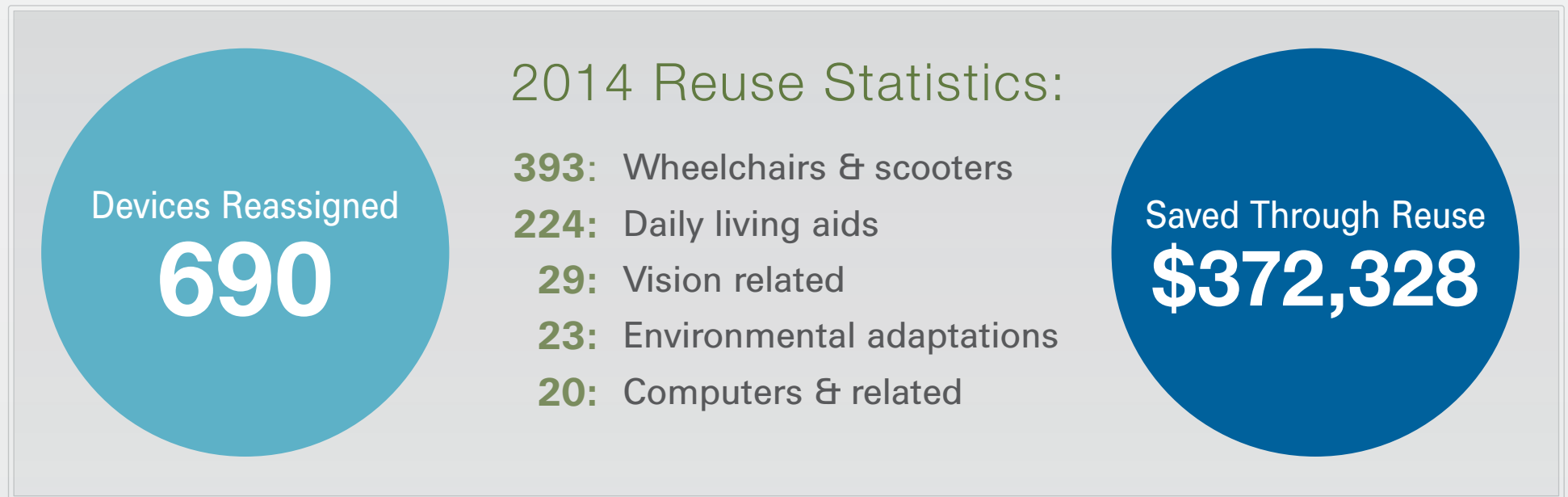
Eric needed to return to work quickly. The AT Staff at CRIL and Eric discussed the many challenges he would face going back to work. Fortunately, CRIL was able to loan two devices to help Eric with work tasks, an Enhanced Vision's Merlin LCD Flat Panel CCTV System and the HIMS Lifestyle Candy Handheld Electronic Video Magnifier.

The next day Eric returned to work with the help of his borrowed equipment. When Eric returned the equipment, he expressed gratitude for the Device Lending Library services.

REUSE

Assistive Technology Reuse is the process of reclaiming and redistributing previously-owned equipment by taking it in, evaluating its workability, making needed repairs if possible, sanitizing, and passing it on to a new owner for little or no cost.

Ability Tools operates the Keep the Wheels Rolling Fund, leads the California AT Reuse Coalition and provides funding support to four reuse programs.



Gregg's Story

Gregg is married and has two young daughters. Gregg has a heart condition and complications from Type 2 Diabetes; he and his family were looking for help with mobility. He received services from the Disability Action Center (DAC), an Ability Tools funded reuse program.

Deborah runs the DAC Reuse Program and had recently received a few donated power wheelchairs that needed some new batteries. Gregg explained to Deborah that his left leg had to be amputated and he was trying to find an affordable power wheelchair. Gregg was immobile and unable to leave their apartment.

Thanks to a small grant from Ability Tools' Keep the Wheels Rolling Repair Fund, Deborah was able to purchase brand new batteries for a donated power wheelchair to give to Gregg.

When Deborah returned to work after the 4th of July holiday, she received a voicemail message from Gregg. He said:

"I want to thank you so much for the wheelchair. It was the first time in months that I was able to get out of the apartment and spend time with my children. If it wasn't for ILSNC I would not have been able to make the memories I did with my girls this weekend." He explained that his family visited the local waterslides, shopping mall, a July 4th picnic, and viewed two fireworks displays.



THE CALIFORNIA AT REUSE COALITION



Ability Tools leads the California AT Reuse Coalition (CATRC) efforts and supports its mission by hosting the CATRC website <http://californiareuse.org>, facilitating coalition meetings and maintaining a statewide listserv connecting member organizations. Members share best practices and challenges on a variety of issues including inventory, policies, storage and staffing.

Earth Day
Donations

62

Types of AT Donated:

- Wheelchairs
- Scooters
- Walkers
- Rollators
- Bathroom Safety Equipment
- Magnifiers
- Exercise Equipment

EARTH DAY REUSE DRIVE

Sponsored by Molina Healthcare

In 2014 we celebrated our first statewide Earth Day Reuse Drive.

During this successful drive, we collaborated with ten different organizations – some of which were brand new partners – and received over 60 donated items to give back to community members in need.



Dominika boarding the Bay Area Rapid Transit train with her mobility scooter.

KEEP THE WHEELS ROLLING REPAIR FUND



The Keep the Wheels Rolling Repair Fund (KWRF) was established in 2014 to provide small grants of up to \$450 to nonprofits with reuse programs for the repair of donated, gently-used wheelchairs and scooters.

Because a dead battery can prohibit a reuse program from fixing a perfectly good chair due to cost, we learned many donated chairs that needed repair were

sitting idle at reuse centers even with great community need. Ability Tools successfully sought grant money to fund the purchase of batteries and other mobility accessories through the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation as well as Anthem Blue Cross.

KWRF remains active, greatly contributes to those in need of AT and helps the environment.

Wheelchairs &
Scooters Repaired

24

KWRF
Funds Expended

\$5,963

Value of
Repairs & Donations
to Californians

\$88,411



Another repaired scooter ready for reuse thanks to the Keep the Wheels Rolling Repair Fund.

INFORMATION & REFERRAL

Ability Tools provides Information and Referral (I&R) assistance to Californians with disabilities looking for assistive technology advice and funding sources. Individuals can contact Ability Tools in multiple ways including our toll-free telephone line, email, online contact form, Facebook and Twitter.



People Served
by AT I&R Service

1,127

Identified Callers:

- 363:** Individuals with Disabilities
- 191:** Family Members, Guardians, and Authorized Representatives
- 57:** Health, Allied Health, Rehabilitation, and Community Living Representatives
- 39:** Representatives of Education
- 20:** Representatives of Employment
- 73:** Representatives of Community Living
- 9:** Representatives of Technology

** 375 callers were not categorized.*

Francisco's Story

Francisco is in his early 30s, quadriplegic and nonverbal. He lives in a skilled nursing facility and wants to move toward a more independent living situation. He had a Dynavox communication device that was difficult to control with his head or mouth stick. He really needed a device with an eye gaze system that would be faster and gentle on his neck.

After being denied insurance funding for an eye gaze system, Francisco contacted Ability Tools. Our I&R Specialist was able to locate a used eye gaze system on the AT Exchange available for free through our reuse program. Shortly after the call, the I&R Specialist was attending an outreach event in his area and delivered the system directly to him. Francisco was thrilled. He continues to communicate with the eye gaze system with success.



Emily is ready to take Information & Referral (I&R) calls as an Ability Tools staff member.

OUTREACH

Ability Tools' programs have a great impact throughout the state. We attend many community events, give presentations and participate in conventions and resource fairs. Our partners from the Independent Living Centers and Device Lending Libraries throughout the state help us to spread the word about all of our AT services.

Total Number of
People Reached

137,013

Numbers of People Reached:

87,175: Social Media, Listservs, and Internet

25,305: Newsletters and Outreach Materials

18,033: Presentations, Expos, and Conferences

6,500: PSA, Radio, TV, and Other Media



Ability Tools
 Assistive Technology Network
 Connecting Californians to Assistive
 Technology (AT) Devices and Services

- Learn about Assistive Technology
 - Borrow a device
- Obtain FREE or low-cost used devices
 - Find AT Services & Funding
 - Get AT assistance

(800) 368-2699 • (800) 900-0706
 AbilityTools.org • info@AbilityTools.org

Assistive Technology (AT)
 Advocates

Device Lending Librarian

Ability Tools

Connecting Californians to Assistive Technology (AT) Devices and Services

Ability Tools

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Ability Tools

Assistive Technology Network

Ability Tools staff member, Rosemarie, working the outreach booth at Disability Capitol Action Day.

CONNECT WITH US

In 2014 Ability Tools made it even easier to get connected to our trainings, weekly blog, social media and our listservs. On our new website, visitors can quickly and easily sign up for any of these “Connect With Us” services:

Ability Tools Weekly: A weekly blog about all things AT-related, including products, success stories, funding, and reviews.

Our social media followers grew in 2014 and continue to grow.

Facebook: Grew by 205 likes, up to 463.

Twitter: Grew by 85 followers, up to 214.

Instagram & Pinterest: Established a presence on Instagram and Pinterest.

Monthly E-Bulletin: Ability Tools sends out a monthly e-bulletin to inform our membership about new trainings, upcoming events, and what is new for loan or for free on the AT Exchange. We had 405 subscribers at the end of 2014.

Listservs:

- Members of our AT Announcements listserv receive information about our upcoming webinars and special news announcements.
- Members of our AT Network listserv network, learn from, and share resources with other like-minded individuals that work or are interested in the field of AT. They also receive information about our upcoming webinars and special news announcements.



Borrow, donate or find gently used AT on the [AT Exchange](#). There are many items available for LOAN, for SALE or for FREE.



For Loan: [iPad/Tablet HandPointer \(green\)](#)



For Loan: [Livescribe 4GB Echo Smartpen](#)



For Loan: [Tobii PCEye Go Eye Tracking Device](#)



For Loan: [Ifrogz Tumble Case For Ipad Mini](#)



For Loan: [GoTalk 9](#)



For Loan: [Apple iPad Air](#)

TRAININGS

Ability Tools provides in-person and online trainings on a broad range of AT topics. Our most popular trainings in 2014 were:

- **Using Technology to Stay On Time, On Task, and Organized**
61 people attended. Presented by Shelley Haven, AT Consultant
- **Latest & Greatest: New Devices & Software for 2014**
44 people attended. Presented by Parents Helping Parents.

A sample of other trainings presented during 2014 included:

- Creative Funding Ideas for Assistive Technology
- AT & the IEP (Individualized Education Program)
- Hands-on group communication device demonstrations

Recorded, open-captioned trainings can also be accessed online anytime via YouTube: <http://youtube.com/user/atnetorg>

Trainings Offered
by Ability Tools

28

People
Participated in Ability
Tools Trainings*

667

People
Accessed Archived
Trainings on YouTube

743

* Webinar and in-person live trainings.



Shannon being shown
how to operate the WHILL
personal mobility device.

PROGRAMMATIC COLLABORATIONS

Ability Tools connects with other CFILC programs to promote services to people with disabilities and expand the reach of assistive technology.



Digital Access Project: Ability Tools staff worked with the California Emerging Technology Fund to establish CFILC's Digital Access Project (DAP) to help low-income people with disabilities achieve access to high-speed Internet at low cost.



Disability Organizing Network: Ability Tools staff collaborated with the Disability Organizing Network to ensure that California's online voter registration page was fully accessible to people with disabilities. As a result, California was the only state in the nation with a fully accessible voter registration page.



Youth Organizing (YO!) Disabled & Proud: Ability Tools connects with the YO! project on a regular basis to reach the YO! primary audience: transition-aged youth with disabilities. We regularly invite YO! members and volunteers to Ability Tools trainings. YO! volunteers learn about Ability Tools as they work at outreach events and participate as panel members during AT trainings. YO! and Ability Tools staff regularly meet to expand interconnections between our projects.

SUPPORT FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTERS

Ability Tools is funded by AB 204 to provide coordination and technical assistance to the Independent Living Centers (ILCs) assistive technology programs, also funded by AB 204. With AB 204 funding, ILCs provide: information & referral, outreach, technical assistance, public awareness, organizational collaboration, service coordination and other optional AT services.

In 2014 Ability Tools supported the ILCs' assistive technology programs in the following ways:

- **AB 204 Reporting:** In 2014 the California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR), the entity providing AB 204 funding, developed new AB 204 reporting requirements. Ability Tools collaborated with the DOR in an effort to streamline reporting processes for the assistive technology section.
- **Monthly AT Advocate Meetings:** Every month Ability Tools facilitates a remote meeting for all ILC-based AT Advocates. During the meetings AT Advocates interact with their peers, solve problems and share resources.
- **Online AT Advocate Community:** Ability Tools created a private online website designed for the exclusive use of AT Advocates. The website includes short bios of each AT Advocate including areas of specialization to increase collaboration.
- **AT Materials:** Ability Tools provides the ILCs with a variety of AT-related materials, including AT tip sheets, for distribution.



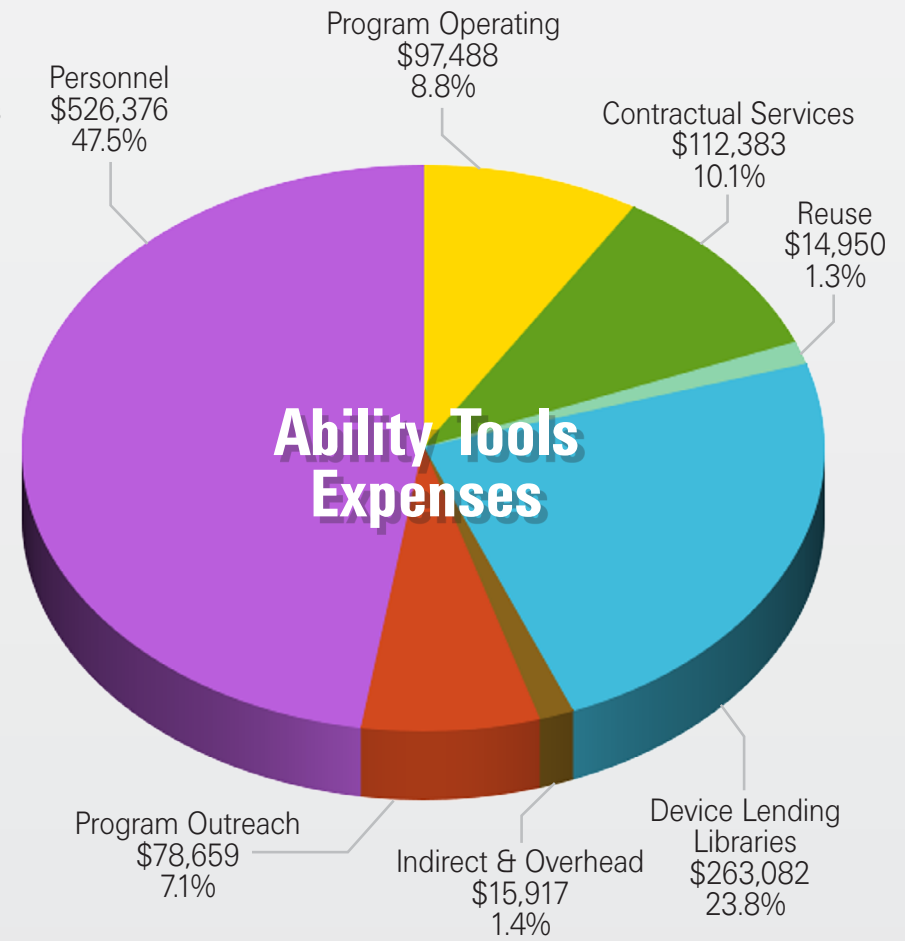
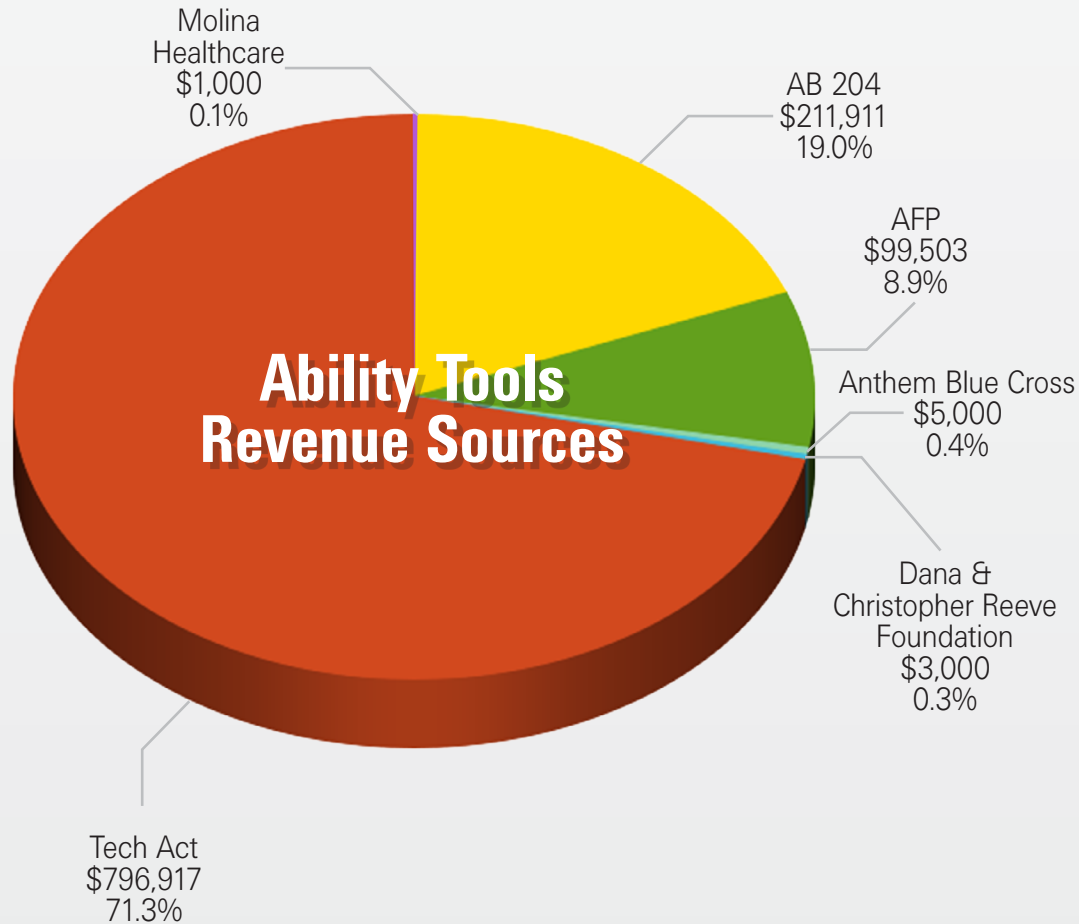
ORGANIZATIONAL COLLABORATIONS

Ability Tools greatly expanded our collaborations with other organizations in 2014:

- **CalAgrAbility:** Ability Tools collaborated with the UC Davis CalAgrAbility program on their grant proposal for continued funding through the USDA. CalAgrAbility was funded, and Ability Tools provides outreach and training to support the program's goal of informing farmers and farm workers with disabilities about assistive technology options.
- **California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES):** Ability Tools agreed to provide Cal OES with long-term device loans during post-disaster recovery. When requested by Cal OES, the devices will be provided to people directly affected by the disaster and will be sourced from the Ability Tools Device Lending Libraries and participating Reuse Programs.
- **MIND Institute:** Ability Tools continued to participate in the UC Davis MIND Institute's AT Consortium and helped with the planning of their annual AT resource fair.
- **Batteries Plus Bulbs:** Ability Tools continued our collaboration with Batteries Plus Bulbs retailers across California to offer a jobber discount to our partner reuse organizations who have the option to use the discount for wheelchair batteries and other supplies.

FINANCIALS

October 1st, 2013 – September 30th, 2014



2014 ABILITY TOOLS BY THE NUMBERS

1

New Name and Website



2

Times the Number of ILC-Based AT Advocate Orientations This Year



8

AT Regional Meetings



318

Outreach events, presentations, demonstrations



690

Used AT Items
Distributed Saving

\$372,328



1,127

I&R Inquiries
Answered



1,462

Device Loans
Made



16,641

Ability Tools
Materials Distributed



Ability Tools is a project of the **California Foundation for Independent Living Centers.**



Ability Tools is made possible through funding from the **Department of Rehabilitation**, financed by the **Administration for Community Living** with funds allocated by the **Assistive Technology Act of 2004.**



Ability Tools would like to thank our funders and organizational supporters.







Ability Tools

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